



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIVE MEXICAN FRUIT FLIES FOUND IN ESCONDIDO

Agriculture Officials Begin Treatment Plan; Residents Warned Not to Remove Backyard Produce

Five immature female Mexican Fruit Flies that have not yet mated were confirmed today in Escondido, prompting treatment to begin by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the County of San Diego Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AWM).

"The quarantine area is currently being identified. In the interim, homeowners and people moving through Escondido should not remove backyard fruits and vegetables from the area because the produce may be infested," said Agricultural Commissioner Bob Atkins.

CDFA and AWM will conduct intensive surveys in approximately nine square miles near the Oak Hill Drive area of Escondido to determine the extent of the infestation. Treatments in the area include:

- **Fruit stripping:** Fruit will be stripped from host plants at the site where the flies were found as well as the immediate surrounding area.
- **Ground spraying:** Involves spraying trees and shrubs with a bait to attract the flies. Homeowners and residents will be notified in writing before this treatment is used on their property.
- **Sterile fly release:** Sterile flies will be released to keep wild flies from breeding.

The Mexican Fruit Fly is one of the most destructive pests in the world. It is known to infest more than 50 different fruits and vegetables, many of which are economically important crops in the county. Damage occurs when the female lays eggs inside the fruit, which hatch into maggots that tunnel through the flesh of the fruit, making it unfit for consumption.

The adult Mexican fruit fly is slightly larger than a housefly and is a pale orange-yellow with whitish stripes. The wings are clear except for several yellow and brown stripes. This fly was first found in California in 1960. A number of major infestations throughout the state have been eradicated since then.

The public can report suspicious flies to the **CDFA PEST HOTLINE** at **1-800-491-1899** or 619-698-1046. If your yard contains fruit trees and you would like to have a fruit fly trap placed on your property, call **1-800-300-8727 (TRAP)**.

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